

Growth and development

PLANNING

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Residents Agree: Keep Town's Character

Results of Long-Range Planning Survey Released

By Kimberley Keyes

Residents love Duxbury's ambiance but aren't necessarily enamored of its taxes, results of the town's comprehensive 1995 survey show.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents mentioned "ambiance" as what they like most about living in Duxbury. Twenty-four percent said "taxes/spending" are what they like least.

Town officials Saturday reviewed a 43-page report containing the results of the comprehensive survey, mailed last December to 9,047 registered voters in Duxbury. The survey received 2,375 returns, representing 26 percent of the voters.

What most surprised consultant Beth Jordan of The Jordan Group, who interpreted the data, was that so many people agreed on the key issues facing the town.

"Everybody wants the same things," said Jordan, a five-year resident of Duxbury. "In terms of the important things, people agree."

Maintaining Duxbury's residential character ranks as a top priority among citizens in all age groups, according to the results.

"Everybody wants the same things. In terms of the important things, people agree."

**— Beth Jordan,
consultant and Duxbury resident**

Funding to support a superior school system, the tax rate, clean drinking water and Duxbury Beach also matter to many residents.

The tax rate was more important to longtime residents (20 years or more) than newcomers (less than

eight years), while school funding was significantly more important to newcomers — who are more likely to have school-age children — than to long-time residents.

"This research indicates that newer residents are moving to town for the beauty and the schools," the report states. "They are looking for additional recreational services and are less concerned with the tax rate."

"At the same time they want to preserve the rural ambiance of the town."

Small neighborhood meetings or focus groups will be set up in the coming months to discuss the survey results, officials said.

Town planner Tom Broadrick said the planning board will consider the results when it reviews subdivision rules and regulations. It will also use them when the board updates the town's 22-year-old comprehensive plan.

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"Now that we've got that data, when the planning board wants to begin, we can move forward," he said.

Re-zoning, expanding the North Hill Golf Club and adding traffic lights were issues that divided public opinion.

Re-zoning land for commercial/business use won favor with 43 percent of respondents, while 42 percent opposed it. In particular, 46 percent favored re-zoning residential parcels along Route 53 for commercial use, but 40 percent opposed it. Males and those aged 45 to 64 were more likely to favor re-zoning.

Regarding the town-owned North Hill Golf Course, 41 percent want to see it expanded and 36 percent do not. Of those who favor expansion, 92 percent want to make the nine-hole course an 18-hole course. Not surprisingly, those who favor expansion are more likely to be golfers.

The town needs more traffic lights, said 40 percent of respondents; 53 percent disagreed. The intersections most in need of traffic lights are Route 3A and Tobey Garden Street, Route 14 and Lincoln Street, and routes 3A and 139, respondents said.

Voters indicated overwhelming satisfaction with public safety in Duxbury. Eighty-seven percent said they are satisfied with police protection and 72 percent approved of the fire protec-

tion.

The survey revealed interesting statistics about the respondents themselves:

- Almost 60 percent have no children under 18 living at home. Of those who do have children, 36 percent have one, 45 percent have two, and 15 percent have three.
- Twenty-seven percent of Duxbury households include a senior citizen.
- Two-thirds of Duxbury men work full-time outside the home, as do one-third of the women. Four percent of each gender works full-time at home.
- Twenty-seven percent of Duxbury women and 1 percent of Duxbury men are homemakers.
- Forty-five percent have a four-wheel-drive vehicle.
- Six percent said they like their fellow townspeople; 11 percent said they don't.

The 10-page survey, sent with prepaid return envelopes, has cost the town \$8,531.45 so far, said Broadrick.

The Jordan Group had not sent its entire bill yet, but Broadrick said Beth Jordan did a lot of the work for free because she lives in Duxbury.

She designed the survey based on questions from town officials, and sent out the returns to be tabulated, Broadrick said. He said she then wrote the report based on the analyzed data.